

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

by Gary J. Hall



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Liverpool, United Kingdom

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Introduction

This book contains 28 sermons on the Ministry of the Holy Spirit. Each one was preached by Rev. Gary J. Hall at Living Word Bible Church, Liverpool, United Kingdom. We pray that these sermons might assist preachers who are teaching on this subject and encourage all who desire to know the basics of what the Holy Bible states about the Holy Spirit.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture texts are from the King James Version.

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Who is the Holy Spirit?

Introduction

There are those in the Christian church that either avoid or exaggerate any teaching concerning the Holy Spirit. Both avoidance and exaggeration of the subject cause much confusion and doctrinal error. Nevertheless, it is of vital importance that we come to terms with what the Scriptures actually teach regarding Him. We have to determine if the Holy Spirit is a person or an 'it.'

What the Holy Spirit isn't

From the outset it must be stated that Bible-believing Christians do not consider the Holy Spirit to be a 'thing' or an 'it.' Many cults only regard Him to be a force like the wind or electricity, but there are those, within the church, who see Him as being merely the 'life-giving power of God,'

The Holy Spirit is never spoken of in material terms in the word of God, yet He is not presented in a vague or abstract way. This does not imply that He is ethereal (intangible) in substance; instead He is spiritual, which means He has a Heavenly and glorious body ... "There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44). Though He cannot be seen with the natural eye we should not think that He will not be visible when we get to Heaven. Nor is He a quality such as goodness, love, or purity, though He has these in His nature.

Who is the Holy Spirit?

He is a real being, a Person with the ability to act, will, create, love, and speak. The Holy Spirit has all the characteristics that identify Him as a Person. Notice the personal pronouns used in Acts 13:2 ... "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." The text uses "I" and "me" to show that He is a real Person rather than an abstract idea. Since He is a Person the verse also proves He has the power of speech.

The Holy Spirit is also deity. He is a member of the Trinity or Godhead. Though we often use the statement "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit," this does not mean that we understand the Holy Spirit to be one-third God or one-third of God. God cannot be divided or else we present Christianity as a pantheistic religion that worships three Gods. Moses plainly taught that "God is one LORD" (Deuteronomy 6:4), yet his words only make sense in light of the fact that God is

eternally self-existing in three distinct and divine Persons. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are equally and fully God. The word 'trinity' is better understood by the term 'tri-unity.' Tri-unity expresses the concept of each member of the Godhead being in absolute and total agreement. This teaching will unfold as we proceed with these studies on the Holy Spirit.

Three are One

The words 'Godhead,' 'Trinity,' and 'tri-unity' all attempt to describe who God is. Each member has His own personality and mission that is in perfect harmony with the other two. The Holy Spirit is co-equal with the Father and the Son, and He will never do or say anything that is outside their agreement. The Godhead does not debate or argue, instead each one knows what should be done or willed. This all-knowledge means that they have equal omniscience, so act and speak as one. The Holy Spirit possesses all the attributes of both the Father and the Son.

The story of Ananias and Sapphira highlights something of this co-equality. In Acts 5:3-4 we read, "Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God." Peter told Ananias that he had lied to the Holy Spirit, later he told Sapphira that she had lied to God. This plainly reveals that the Holy Spirit is God, for by lying to the Holy Spirit they had lied to God.

The New Testament demonstrates in numerous places that the Holy Spirit is God and part of the Trinity. The following Scriptures will suffice, for now, to reveal this fact:

Matthew 28:19 ... "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

John 4:24 ... "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

2 Corinthians 3:17 ... "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty."

The Old Testament also offers us insight into the Person of the Holy Spirit. When compared with the New Testament we clearly see that the Holy Spirit is God:

Exodus 17:7 ... "And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?" Yet in Hebrews 3:7-9 Paul

states that the Israelites tempted the Holy Spirit.

Jeremiah 31:33 ... “But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Hebrews 10:15-17 tells us, “The Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.”

Conclusion

In this study we have sought to show that the Holy Spirit is a Person rather than an indescribable entity. The Holy Bible reinforces this teaching in hundreds of places. In our next study we will take a look at His characteristics and attributes.

The Character and Attributes of the Holy Spirit

The terms “Holy Spirit” and “Holy Ghost” are interchangeable and refer to exactly the same Person of the Trinity. We find the two terms used in John 7:37-39 ... “In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)” The words “Spirit” and “Ghost” are derived from the Greek word ‘pneuma.’

The Characteristics and Attributes of the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit shares the same character and attributes with those of God the Father and God the Son. Here we present a brief outline of some of these:

a) Indivisibility

It is not possible to divide the Godhead into three separate Gods. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are equally God. “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all” (Ephesians 4:4-6).

b) United but distinct

The Trinity is united in purpose and will. Though this is true, there are certain terms and statements used which cannot be applied to all Persons. For instance, the Son is not the Father, and the Father is not the Son. The Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, but the Father and the Son do not proceed from the Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus Christ made it clear that it is possible to speak against the Father or Himself and be forgiven, but no one who speaks against the Holy Spirit can ever be forgiven (Matthew 12:31-32).

Neither the Father or the Holy Spirit came to this fallen world to redeem the lost, only Jesus Christ could accomplish that work. The Holy Spirit was sent as the Comforter after Jesus ascended into Heaven. The Father and the Son are in

Heaven, but the Holy Spirit is now present upon the earth.

c) Eternal

The Holy Spirit is as eternal as both the Father and the Son. He has no beginning and will know no end. “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14).

d) Omnipresence

This means that He is present everywhere at the same time. Psalm 139:7-10 has the psalmist declaring, “Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me.”

e) Omniscience

The Holy Spirit is all-knowing and all-wise. His knowledge and understanding cannot be diminished or increased, nor does He need the wisdom of men to direct Him. “Who hath directed the Spirit of the LORD, or being his counsellor hath taught him? With whom took he counsel, and who instructed him, and taught him in the path of judgment, and taught him knowledge, and showed to him the way of understanding?” (Isaiah 40:13-14). He has perfect knowledge of all things ... “The Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God” (1 Corinthians 2:10-11).

f) Omnipotence

The Holy Spirit is also all-powerful. There is nothing that He cannot do. It is impossible for Him to decrease or increase in power ... “Is the Spirit of the LORD straightened?” (Micah 2:7). The word ‘straightened’ means ‘restricted or limited.’ It is this power that He shares with those who truly commit their lives to Christ ... “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8). The power believers receive is of the same quality but not the same quantity! This is what we mean by being baptised in the Holy Spirit, we will discuss this in a future study, but suffice to say, His power is essential for

Christian living.

Conclusion

In this section of 'The Ministry of the Holy Spirit' we have endeavoured to show something of His character and attributes to assist us in seeing Him as a real Person. We must take this thought further by investigating the various names given to the Holy Spirit in Scripture.

The Names of the Holy Spirit (Part 1)

In Biblical times names always had meaning. They were meant to be descriptive of the person who had that name. This is especially true regarding the various names and titles of the Godhead. As a Person, the Holy Spirit has several names all of which have special and unique meaning. We cannot discuss every instance where these names appear in Scripture, but the following study should help us in our understanding of the Person of the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit of God

In 1 Corinthians 3:16 He is called ‘The Spirit of God’ ... “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” This is the equivalent of “The Spirit of the Lord GOD” (Isaiah 61:1), “The Spirit of the living God” (2 Corinthians 3:3), and “The Spirit of God” (Genesis 1:2). These verses reveal the Holy Spirit’s relationship to the Godhead. He is the Spirit of Jehovah.

The Spirit of the Son

Being a member of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit is also the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 8:9 offers us a powerful insight into the relationship between the members of the Trinity ... “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.” He is also known as “The Spirit of his Son” (Galatians 4:6), and “The Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:19).

The Spirit of Judgement

The Holy Spirit, as God, is intimately involved in justice, law, and order. An aspect of His ministry concerns purity and sanctification. This is why the terms “The Spirit of Judgement” and “The Spirit of Burning” (Isaiah 4:4; 28:5-6) is used in Scripture. The Lord Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit’s ministry in a similar way ... “And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged” (John 16:8-11). This once again reveals the inter-relationship of the Trinity, for John the Baptist said that Jesus Christ would “Baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Matthew 3:11).

The Spirit of Grace and Supplication

This name is found in Zechariah 12:10 ... “And I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications.” We are connecting this term with the Holy Spirit since Hebrews 10:29 calls Him “The Spirit of Grace.” The Holy Spirit is responsible, along with the church, for calling mankind to Christ ... “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). He brings God’s mercy, and directs and draws the sinner to Christ, because He is the Spirit of Grace.

The Spirit of the Father

Matthew 10:20 describes Him as “The Spirit of your Father.” The Lord Jesus Christ points to the Personality of the Holy Spirit when He responded to Peter’s confession of faith by saying, “it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” Though He speaks through people it is still evident that He speaks as a Person.

The Spirit of Truth

He is called the Spirit of Truth because it is impossible for Him to lie or be in error. His ministry has its foundation squarely on the truth of God’s Word, since He is its Author ... “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Timothy 3:16). He will not lead or direct contrary to what the Scriptures teach and say. This is why the Bible is known as “The sword of the Spirit” (Ephesians 6:17). Only those who are led by the Holy Spirit have the truth ... “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you” ... “But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of” ... “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come” (John 14:16-17; 15:26; 16:13). We must have the Holy Spirit operating in our lives otherwise we do not belong to God or we will fall into error ... “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if

any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his” ... “Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error” (Romans 8:9; 1 John 4:6).

The Names of the Holy Spirit (Part 2)

The Spirit of Holiness

“And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead” (Romans 1:4). The very fact that He is the Holy Spirit proves that He is the Spirit of Holiness. Without holiness the believer automatically hinders the work of the Holy Spirit in his life. Such holiness is gained as we draw nearer to God and are transformed by His Spirit. The Holy Spirit’s work involves sanctification. The Spirit of Holiness is working to bring “the beauty of holiness” into our lives (Psalm 29:2).

The Spirit of Life

In Romans 8:2 it is written, “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.” The Spirit of Life is just as available today as He was in the first century church. Our relationship with God should not be boring, lifeless and regimented. The Holy Spirit brings life-giving dynamic power into the life of the believer. His presence should be part of every area of our lives because He is the Spirit of Life.

Spirit of Adoption

“For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father” (Romans 8:15). Through the blood of Jesus Christ we are adopted into the family of God. The Holy Spirit draws the sinner to Christ so that he can be reconciled to God.

The Spirit of Promise

On the Day of Pentecost the followers of Christ were gathered together to wait for the fulfilment of Christ’s promise, the promise of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; 2:33), as was prophesied in Joel 2:28. The Scriptures tell us that all flesh (mankind) could receive of this promise. Paul makes it clear that true believers have the Spirit of Promise ... “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13).

The Comforter

This is probably the most well known and used names of the Holy Spirit. In John

14:16 we find the precious promise of Jesus Christ to His disciples ... “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever.”

The Greek word for Comforter is ‘Parakletos.’ ‘Para’ means ‘alongside’ and ‘kaleto’ means ‘to call.’ Therefore, the Holy Spirit was to be sent by Jesus to be with His followers. The word was also used in a legal sense also. A paraclete was someone who was the defence council or advocate at a trial. We know that the Holy Spirit intercedes for us ... “Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Roman 8:26).

The Holy Spirit, as the Comforter, is with us to instruct, guide, and assist throughout our lives. He will teach us what the Scriptures say and teach ... “These things have I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father” (John 16:25). The Holy Spirit will only ever reveal and glorify the Lord Jesus Christ. He only works through those who magnify and obey the Lord. He encourages, comforts, empowers, and helps us to live for Christ.

Conclusion

Scripture is full of terms, names and titles that identify the Holy Spirit as a Person. They reveal His nature and ministry. Our brief study of the names of the Holy Spirit is only a sampler for a much wider and deeper investigation. As we read the Bible let us watch for the expressions that reveal something about the Spirit of God.

The Symbols of the Holy Spirit

Scripture records a number of symbols which apply to the Holy Spirit. They are given to teach us important truths, but we must beware falling into idolatry by mistaking the symbolism for the Spirit of God. Types and representations are similar to parables in that we derive valuable teaching from them. They are like famous brand logos that represent the company, but they are not the company themselves. Many have failed to recognise this fact, and have made the symbol an object of worship and adoration. This is especially true amongst those Charismatics who overuse the dove symbol.

The purpose of symbolism is to shed light on, add understanding, and to illustrate the truth. They should never be used in a mystical or obscure way. The ceremonial factions within Christendom have replaced the Word of God with pictures, icons and other images. We too must be very cautious regarding the use of the following symbols that relate to the Holy Spirit.

Oil

Most Christians regard oil as a symbol of the Person and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Throughout the Old Testament we see oil being used for holy purposes. The priests were consecrated and ordained unto God as oil was poured upon their heads ... “Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and pour it upon his head, and anoint him” (Exodus 29:7 – see also Leviticus 8). During such ceremonies oil was used abundantly, for it ran down the priest’s beard and clothing ... “It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments” (Psalm 133:2). The kings of Israel were also anointed with oil as they took up office.

Oil was used to keep the lamps burning in the Holy Place, and it was vital that they should never run dry ... “And thou shalt command the children of Israel, that they bring thee pure oil olive beaten for the light, to cause the lamp to burn always” (Exodus 27:20). Without the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives and churches, spiritual darkness soon overtakes us.

The large quantity of oil used reminds us of the New Testament Baptism in the Spirit. We do not need a volume of oil in order to have the presence and power of the Spirit poured upon and within us.

Oil can be used to anoint the sick also ... “Anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them ... Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the

church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord” (Mark 6:13; James 5:14). This reveals to us that the Holy Spirit must be involved in every area of the believer’s life. Just as oil enlightens and lubricates, so the Holy Spirit wants to illuminate and eliminate friction in our lives. We should ask the Good Shepherd to anoint our heads with oil (Psalm 23:5).

The Dove

This symbolism is taken from Luke 3:22 where the Holy Spirit descends upon the Lord Jesus Christ in the form of a dove at His baptism. The dove is used here to reveal the gentle, yet powerful, workings of the Holy Spirit. A dove is a gentle creature that is easily shooed away, so no wonder Paul warns the church against grieving the Spirit of God (Ephesians 4:30). Where there is a rejection of His ministry, the Holy Spirit will not remain for long. Through the gentle workings of the Holy Spirit, God points out our failures and nudges us in the right direction. The dove is used today as a symbol of purity and peace.

Living Water

Jesus compared the presence in the believer’s life as being like “Rivers of living water” (John 7:37-39). The one who is filled with the Holy Spirit has this “living water” flowing from his innermost being. This analogy is found in the Old Testament too ... “For I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thine offspring ... And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit” (Isaiah 44:3; Joel 2:28-29).

Just as water is important for existence, so too is the Holy Spirit if we are to maintain our spiritual life. It washes, purifies and refreshes wherever it goes. This corresponds to the ministry of the Holy Spirit also.

Wind

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4). This symbol is not lost on the disciples, since

Jesus had spoken of the Holy Spirit in a similar way ... “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit” (John 3:8).

Fire

If we compare two passages of Scripture we soon realise why fire is symbolic of the Holy Spirit. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11) and “There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:3-4). Fire refines and can change material from one form to another. Fire purifies, warms and illuminates.

Conclusion

These symbols are helpful in teaching us something of the nature and ministry of the Holy Spirit. The teachings that relate to these symbols will be expounded upon in the studies that follow.

The Creative Power of the Holy Spirit

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:1-2) ... “Thou sendest forth thy Spirit, they are created: and thou renewest the face of the earth” (Psalm 104:30).

Scripture reveals that the Holy Spirit took an active role in the creation of the universe. Genesis tells us that “God created” and that His Spirit “moved,” to indicate that the power of the Holy Spirit, as a member of the Trinity, energised the matter that was brought into being.

His Creative Power

God created this world for man to inhabit. The Trinity worked together to form this universe, including the earth, in absolute perfection. After initially bringing the materials into being and giving them form, the Holy Spirit moved with generating, dynamic and life-giving power “upon the face of the waters.” In a spiritual sense, this is the same power that was evident on the Day of Pentecost ... “But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:8).

Because of His movement over creation the power for life and the power to sustain life surged into the formless, void and dark universe. “By His Spirit He hath garnished the heavens” (Job 26:13). It would be the same power that energised Adam when “the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul” (Genesis 2:7), for Job 33:4 states, “The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life.” The Hebrew word ‘ruach’ is used for wind and breath as well as for spirit. Some of cults regard the Holy Spirit as nothing more than a ‘force’ like electricity, but He is a Person with creative power rather than an impersonal energy.

Let Us

We read in Genesis 1:26 that God said, “Let us make man in our image.” The ‘us’ must not be divorced from ‘our.’ Since man was not made in the image of angels or animals, he must have created in God’s image. Therefore the ‘us’ must speak of the Trinity / Godhead. Even the Hebrew word for God (Elohim) is a

uniplural word which implies a unit comprised of more than one. This is why we can use the word Trinity (tri-unity) when speaking about the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit was intimately involved in creation. We read of God the Holy Spirit energising what was brought into being, both with regards to universe itself and man. As believers, we should not doubt that the Holy Spirit can dynamically empower those who put their trust in Jesus Christ. Paul, in Romans 8:11 tells us that “if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” This quickening power is evident throughout His entire ministry. The same Holy Spirit power that raised up the Lord Jesus Christ from the dead can dwell in our lives too!

The Holy Spirit's Ministry through Old Testament Characters

The Holy Spirit's ministry through individuals in the Old Testament was not the same as it was from the Day of Pentecost onwards. In the Old Testament He 'came upon' a few notable characters for particular reasons. Neither did He remain with those individuals throughout their lives. Just before His ascension into Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ promised that the coming Holy Spirit would abide permanently with His followers. We speak of Old Testament characters being blessed by the Holy Spirit 'coming upon' them, this is very different from being 'baptised with (or in) the Spirit. He moved upon them, guiding, directing and encouraging for a specific purpose. For example, the story of Gideon illustrates the fact that the Holy Spirit came upon certain people to give wisdom or strength (Judges 6-7). It appears that He ministered through national leaders such as Moses, Joshua, Samuel, and the judges and kings, and the prophets. We will take a brief look at some Old Testament characters that were used by God in this way.

Joseph

"And Pharaoh said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this is, a man in whom the Spirit of God is?" (Genesis 41:38). Pharaoh obviously spoke the truth here, though it is doubtful that he realised the full significance of his words. The Holy Spirit gave Joseph wisdom that confounded the so-called wise men of his day. He interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, and was able to protect Egypt from the full ravages of the famine.

Moses

The Holy Spirit's ministry through Moses is clear to see as we read through the first five books of the Old Testament. It is Isaiah who reveals to us that the Holy Spirit was with Moses in a special way ... "Then he remembered the days of old, Moses, and his people, saying, Where is he that brought them up out of the sea with the shepherd of his flock? where is he that put his holy Spirit within him? ... As a beast goeth down into the valley, the Spirit of the LORD caused him to rest: so didst thou lead thy people, to make thyself a glorious name" (Isaiah 63:11,14). The Spirit of God gave Moses the strength, determination, and

wisdom to lead the three million people of Israel from Egypt to the Promised Land. Judaism consider Moses to be the greatest man who ever lived, but it was the Holy Spirit who made him great.

Bezaleel

God, through His Spirit, gave specifications for the building of the Tabernacle, its furniture, and for the garments the priests had to wear. Craftsmanship is good, but the men used to construct the Tabernacle had to be Spirit-led. Bezaleel was used by God as foreman over the work ... “See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: and I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, and in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.” (Exodus 31:2-5). God does not use robots that follow His blueprints, instead He empowers those He chooses for specific roles with wisdom, understanding and ability.

Joshua

“And the LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and lay thine hand upon him” (Numbers 27:18). Deuteronomy 34:9 informs us that Joshua was full of the “the spirit of wisdom.” No wonder he became one of Israel’s greatest leaders.

Samson

If we read the story of Samson in Judges 13-16, we will find that the Holy Spirit came mightily upon him during one of Israel’s darkest eras. This tragic account reveals the fact that a person can be dynamically used by God but, because of sin, find his life go terribly wrong.

Saul

As the first of Israel’s kings, Saul received a special anointing from God. The prophet Samuel, through inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said to Saul, “And the spirit of the LORD will come upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man” (1 Samuel 10:6). This is exactly what happened ... “And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them” (1 Samuel 10:10). Though he enjoyed the privileges of his office

but soon rejected his responsibilities. Because of disobedience to God's clear commands we read that "But the spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him" (1 Samuel 16:14). He would turn from God and involve himself the occult, only to commit suicide (1 Samuel 31). Here is one who grieved the Holy Spirit away.

Conclusion

This study illustrates how the Holy Spirit worked through men in the Old Testament. There are many other characters such as David, Ezekiel and Daniel that were dynamically used by the Spirit of God. Maybe in your personal study you could investigate in what ways He ministered through them. Behind the accounts of these men's lives is the marvellous fact that God chose (and still chooses) to work with frail humanity. He could simply ignore us, yet He has chosen to work in and with us for His glory and our blessing.

The Holy Spirit in the Tabernacle

God made man for His glory and so that he might fellowship with Him. Right from the beginning there was a living relationship so that man was free to converse with God ... “And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day” (Genesis 3:8). This communion with God was broken when Adam and Eve sinned by being disobedient to His word. Nevertheless, God made it possible for man to have fellowship with Him by less direct means.

The Tabernacle

Because man is a spiritual being made in the image of God, he cannot truly be happy unless he is in fellowship with his Creator. In the early chapters of the Bible we read of God fellowshiping with individuals like Abraham, and family groups such as Noah's. It is not until we come to the final chapters of Genesis that the nation of Israel, as His chosen people, came into a covenant relationship God.

Through Moses God instructed the tribes of Israel to build a huge tent, the Tabernacle, where He could commune with them. Inside the Tabernacle was the Holy of Holies, where the Ark of the Covenant (the Mercy Seat) was situated (Exodus 26). It is here that God's presence would be made known to His people, the high priest acting as mediator. His presence was hidden from public view because no one could look upon and live (Exodus 33:20). The Shekinah Glory of God would fill this place. The word ‘Shekinah’ is similar to the word for skin and dwelling in Hebrew, so we can clearly see the typology of the Tabernacle. Many valuable truths can be gleaned from a study of the Tabernacle.

The Lord Jesus Christ

The Lord Jesus Christ was “God with us” (Matthew 1:23). John reminds us that He was “the Word” (John 1:1), and that this “Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). The word “dwelt” is translated from the Greek meaning ‘tabernacled.’ He was the very presence of God with mankind.

The Holy Spirit

Jesus forewarned His disciples that He would be going back to the Father ... “I

go to my Father, and ye see me no more” (John 16:10), but He promised to send the Holy Spirit (John 16:13). The Holy Spirit would be responsible for bringing the presence of God to men. He would come and dwell in those who have true faith in Christ ... “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever” (John 14:16).

Conclusion

As we meditate upon the ways that God has chosen to commune with man, we soon realise that through the Holy Spirit He now dwells in the lives of believers. He has always revealed Himself, associated with, and offered fellowship to man. This is no less true with regards to the Holy Spirit. It is through the Holy Spirit that He comes to each one of us today.

The Spirit of God is now ‘tabernacled’ with man. Paul said, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16). Therefore we see that the Old Testament Tabernacle served as a symbol of what God intended since the Day of Pentecost ... “And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:4). God’s presence is not impersonal as with the Tabernacle, but is dynamically personal through the Holy Spirit. “That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us” (2 Timothy 1:14, see also Ephesians 2:21-22; 1 Peter 2:4-5.)

The Holy Spirit in Old Testament Typology

In the Old Testament we find typology that refers to the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is especially true in relation to what is commonly called ‘The Baptism in the Holy Spirit.’ Our study is not meant to be exhaustive, but is designed to highlight just three areas of the Old Testament where the Holy Spirit can be seen.

The Feast of Pentecost

In Leviticus 23 we read of the various feasts which the Lord ordained as memorials for the people of Israel. These were meant to be reminders of the past and pointers for the future. See our studies on ‘The Feasts of the Lord’ for more information.

The Feast of Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after Passover. We understand that Passover speaks of the sacrificial death of Jesus Christ on the cross. He alone is our Passover Lamb (John 1:29 with Isaiah 53). Without the Passover there could not be a Pentecost. Many claim to have the Holy Spirit in their lives without ever coming to Christ for salvation.

Exactly fifty days after the death of the Lord, the Holy Spirit was poured out upon those waiting in the upper room ... “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:1-4).

The Anointing Oil

We have mentioned the symbolism of oil in a previous study, but it is fascinating to view this alongside the use of blood during the anointing of a leper. In Leviticus 14 we read of blood and oil being used for the cleansing of lepers. A lamb must slain as a sin offering, “And the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot” (:14). After this the oil was applied to the same spots

... “And of the rest of the oil that is in his hand shall the priest put upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot, upon the blood of the trespass offering. And the remnant of the oil that is in the priest’s hand he shall pour upon the head of him that is to be cleansed: and the priest shall make an atonement for him before the LORD” (:17-18). We see how the oil is poured out after the blood, and that it must be applied to the same place the blood was. This is symbolic of the sinner’s need of cleansing through the blood of Christ, and the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They are treated as a single act in Leviticus, therefore every believer should receive in infilling of the Spirit.

The Pillars of Cloud and of Fire

During the journey around the Wilderness, the Jews were guided by the presence of God. During the day they had the pillar of cloud, and during the night, the pillar of fire (Exodus 13:21; Numbers 9:15-23). The Apostle Paul referring to this says, “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea” (1 Corinthians 10:1-2). Paul is using the story as types of baptism the believer must experience. The Jews were baptised in the Red Sea (the blood of Christ), but also in the cloud (the Shekinah glory of God). On the Day of Pentecost what looked like tongues of fire rested upon the believers (Acts 2:3), representing the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives. He would lead and guide them ... “When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

Conclusion

The need for the Holy Spirit’s presence and ministry in our lives should not be questioned. We are not discussing Pentecostalism or the Charismatic Movement here, for the Holy Spirit is vital for all who claim to be Bible-believers. Would it have been satisfactory for the Jews to celebrate Passover but ignore Pentecost? Would the leper be cleansed if the priest failed to administer the oil? Could the Israelites have reached the Promised Land without the ‘Cloud’? Nor can we truly be the children of God without having the Holy Spirit in our lives ... “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his ... For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:9,14).

The Inspirational Ministry of the Holy Spirit under the Old Covenant

From previous studies we have discovered that the Holy Spirit was very prominent in the Old Testament. In fact, He was also working in the background inspiring the writer of the various books of Scripture. Men like Moses, David, Isaiah, and Jeremiah wrote under His inspiration, for we are told by the apostle Peter that “the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:21). The apostle Paul adds, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God” (2 Timothy 3:16), therefore the inspiration must have been the work of the God the Holy Spirit.

Inspiration

God’s Spirit moved upon the Old Testament writers and prophets in a remarkable and powerful way. Some of them were may not have been unaware of this fact, but they were granted revelations direct from God, so that His word could be spread abroad. As we read the Prophets we understand that His will, plans and purposes were being made known to Israel and the nations. This inspirational ministry of the Holy Spirit was largely on a personal level, that is, through individual men (and sometimes women such as Miriam, Esther and Ruth.)

Used by but not Filled with

The Holy Spirit came upon people in the under the Old Covenant instead of actually filling them with His presence. When it is said that He did fill them, it was only for a certain period of time rather than having His continuous presence. The abiding presence of the Holy Spirit could only be given after the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Christ ... “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you” (John 16:7) ... “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified) (John 7:38-39). Such a promise is misleading if the Holy Spirit dwelt within Old Testament prophets on a continuous basis.

Guiding and Leading

This does not mean that the Holy Spirit was not continuously upon the earth prior to the Day of Pentecost. His Old Testament ministry was predominately amongst the nation of Israel. God said, “For I am with you, saith the LORD of hosts: according to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not” (Haggai 2:4-5). As we read the account of Israel’s history, we learn that that often fell away from God because they refused to obey the voice of His Spirit ... “Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness” (Hebrews 3:7-8). Nevertheless, He never took His Spirit away from them, for they still needed His guidance ... “As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD; My spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and for ever” (Isaiah 59:21). The punishment for disobedience included falling into the hands of their enemies, but even when God withdrew divine protection and aid, He was still working to bring Israel to repentance. This is exactly what the Holy Spirit has been doing since the Jews rejected Christ as Messiah and Lord. One day, through His ministry, “all Israel shall be saved” (Romans 11:26).

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit’s ministry in the Old Testament was on three basic levels:

1. He worked as the Creator.
2. He worked as the Inspirer.
3. He worked as the Guide.

It is very obvious even to the casual reader that the Holy Spirit was indeed ministering under the Old Covenant, and that through Him the chosen people were being brought into a closer relationship with God. It has ever been part of His ministry, in every era, to draw men and women to the place where they can experience the fullness of God’s goodness, grace, and glory.

The Holy Spirit and the Incarnation

Few Christians realise that the Gospels, though in the New Testament, are actually records of Christ's life under the Old Covenant. They should be regarded as an introduction to the New Covenant that would be established by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ upon the cross. Various individuals mentioned in Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were moved upon by the Holy Spirit in a similar way He did in the Old Testament. We will briefly mention some of these before looking at the Holy Spirit's connection to Christ's birth.

Mary

Mary, the mother of Jesus, experienced the mighty power and presence of the Holy Spirit in a very special and unique way. Luke 1:35 tells us, "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This creative work of the Holy Spirit can happen only once in eternity. It never took place before and can never be repeated. Also, Mary is the only person who would ever receive this blessing. Why? Because through the creative power of the Spirit the Saviour would be born.

Elizabeth, Zachariah, and John

Mary's cousin Elizabeth also experienced the Holy Spirit in her life. Luke 1:41 records, "And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost." Not only this, but her child, John the Baptist, would be "filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15). Zachariah was "filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied" (Luke 1:67). This filling was for a reason and a purpose. They were filled with His power not His abiding presence. Since the Day of Pentecost both are true for the believer. The Holy Spirit inspired Elizabeth and Zachariah to rejoice and prophesy, so we should limit the 'filling' to this alone.

Simeon and Anna

Both these persons were found in the Temple at the dedication of Jesus. The Holy Spirit came upon them to prophesy something about the baby in Mary's arms. "There was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same

man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law" (Luke 2:25-27). It was through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that He knew and spoke of the baby as the Messiah (Luke 2:28-31), and directly to Mary about her future sorrow (Luke 2:34-35).

Anna, an elderly widow, was known as a prophetess. She too realised who the child was. "there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity; and she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day. And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem" (Luke 2:36-38). Though not mentioned, it is obvious that the Holy Spirit moved her to speak.

The Incarnation

We noted above that Christ was conceived by the creative power of the Holy Spirit in the womb of the virgin Mary. To reject the virgin birth of Christ is to reject the Holy Spirit. If, through a creative act of the Spirit, creation was energised (Genesis 1:2), it should not seem impossible for the virgin birth of Christ to take place through His ministry. The Holy Spirit was fulfilling a prophecy which was given thousands of years before through Isaiah ... "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14).

The birth of Christ had to be accomplished by this method. If He was born of a human father he could not be Saviour. This miracle of conception speaks of the fact that Jesus Christ was born without the sin nature. Jesus is the only person who has ever lived that was sinlessly perfect, because He came to die for sinners ... "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). This is why Matthew writes, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). He points his readers back to Isaiah's prophecy, and tells us the exact reason why it had to be a virgin birth through the power of the Holy Spirit; Jesus is "God with us." God could not be "manifest in the flesh" any other way

(1 Timothy 3:16).

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit is active in every area of ministry as is the Father and Son. We have seen that He was working, influencing, inspiring, and involved in every detail leading up to the birth of the Saviour. The Old Testament records the acts of the Spirit just as the book of Acts does. Everything He did in the past was leading up to this glorious event, the Incarnation.

The Holy Spirit and the Life of Christ

In our previous study we noted how the Holy Spirit was involved in the incarnation. Now we need to take a look at His ministry with regards to the life of Christ from boyhood to His death on the cross.

Boyhood

It is certain that the Holy Spirit was active in the early life of the Lord Jesus as He was in manhood. Like all Jewish children He would have heard all the teachings from the Law and the Prophets as He attended the local synagogue. Luke 2:52 tells us that “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” At the age of thirteen He astounded the theologians in the temple with His great understanding of the Scriptures (Luke 2:46-51). Though He grew up as any human child, the Holy Spirit no doubt guided His development.

Christ’s Baptism

At His baptism in the Jordan River there was a very special manifestation of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 3:16 records that “Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him.” This is why the dove is often used to symbolise the Holy Spirit. We also note that the Trinity was present at this moment; Jesus was being baptised, the Father spoke, and the Holy Spirit descended (Matthew 3:13-17). This baptism was not the baptism of repentance; instead it was Christ’s (symbolic) washing and anointing as the Great High Priest in preparation for the Supreme Sacrifice through His blood. The Holy Spirit was actually anointing Jesus for His future ministry.

Christ’s Temptations

After His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus went through a series of temptations for forty days and nights in the wilderness. Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:12-13, and Luke 4:1-13 each describe something of what Christ went through as Satan tested Him. We are informed that “Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil” (Luke 4:1). It was God’s will that the Messiah should undergo these temptations to prove that He was the perfect Saviour ... “And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that

obey him ... For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (Hebrews 5:9; 2:10.) At each test Jesus used the “Sword of the Spirit” against the Devil (Ephesians 6:17).

Christ’s Earthly Ministry

The earthly ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ took place during the final three years of His life, but during this time He ministered under the anointing of the Holy Spirit ... “God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with him” (Acts 10:38). It should not surprise us to learn that Jesus, as a human being, was filled with the Spirit ... “For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him” (John 3:34). He was the first person in all of history who had the Holy Spirit without limitation or measure. Every word, act, and miracle of Jesus was through the power and anointing of the Holy Spirit. Jesus Himself said, “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord” (Luke 4:18-19.)

Christ’s Death

Though Jesus, in obedience to the Father’s will, freely laid down His life for us, He did it through the power of the Spirit ... “How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” (Hebrews 9:14).

Christ’s Resurrection

It was impossible for death and the grave to bind Jesus. After three days and three nights He was alive again. The Spirit of God had an active part in this too, for Romans 8:11 tells us, “But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.” The quickening power of the Holy Spirit brought life back into Christ’s earthly body.

Christ’s Ascension

Before ascending to the Father, the Lord Jesus Christ spoke of the coming of the

Holy Spirit. He had previously encouraged them with the words, “The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you” (John 14:26), but now He informs His disciples that it was about to happen just as He promised ... “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). From this point the earthly ministry of the Holy Spirit began.

Conclusion

Every part of the life and ministry of Christ was influenced and anointed by the Holy Spirit. From His conception to His ascension we see just how involved the Spirit was with Jesus. If God’s only begotten Son needed the presence of the Holy Spirit, how much more each one of us!

The Prophecy and the Promise

Though there were one hundred and twenty people in the upper room, the Holy Spirit came not because of the large crowd, but because they were gathered in obedience and unity (Acts 1:13-15). It is obvious that there is strength in unity rather than numbers, for Jesus said, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20), so it must be true of the Spirit also. It is when believers are “in one accord” that Holy Spirit moves ... “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments; as the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore” (Psalm 133).

The Day of Pentecost

“And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place” (Acts 2:1). Just as in Old Testament days, the Feast of Pentecost took place fifty days after Passover (when Christ’s crucifixion took place). It was on this day that the prophecy and the promise were fulfilled. In Joel 2:28-29 we read, “And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit.” The apostle Peter referred to this prophecy in his first sermon (Acts 2:16-21). In a number of places in John’s Gospel we read of Jesus’ promise concerning the Spirit, but just prior to His ascension He reminded the disciples, “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence ... But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:5,8).

It is interesting that the Feast of Pentecost was also known as the Festival of Harvest, for on this day three thousand souls came to Christ (Acts 2:41), and shortly after over five thousand became believers too (Acts 4:4). “Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved” (Acts 2:47).

The Power

“And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:2-4). What took place in the upper room was not according to human power or will. These timid and fearful believers did not know what to expect as fulfilment of Christ’s promise (John 20:19). What took place was a mighty manifestation of the Holy Spirit ... “Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts ... Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Zechariah 4:6; Acts 1:8). What then was the Holy Spirit “power” that the one hundred and twenty received?

To most Pentecostals this was the ability to speak with other tongues, but this is not the power promised by Jesus. Though the Gift of Tongues has not ceased from the church, it was used for a very specific reason on the Day of Pentecost. Jesus tells us what would be the evidence that they had received the power ... “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). Peter and the eleven apostles immediately preached the word of God, in various languages that they had not learned, to Jews from several nations (Acts 2:5-14). Some teach that one must receive the power (baptism) of the Holy Spirit in exactly the same way that the one hundred and twenty did, that is, the initial evidence of being baptised in the Spirit is speaking in tongues. But where do we hear of rushing mighty winds and flames of fire today? The Gift of Tongues is still available today (1 Corinthians 12:8-10), but the tongues mentioned in Acts 2 are for a specific purpose, preaching the Gospel to the visitors to Jerusalem. We must acknowledge that it was not “tongues” that saved the three thousand, instead it was Holy Spirit inspired preaching ... “For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek ... For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:18).

Some people, who knew no better, mocked and said that the believers were drunkards (Acts 2:13-15). There will always be those who will scoff at the manifestation of the Spirit. Peter was divine inspired to preach and correct the mockers’ misunderstanding by referring them to Joel’s prophecy. Isaiah also prophesied that God’s unbelieving people would be spoken to in other languages

... “For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people” (Isaiah 28:11).

Conclusion

Everything that happened on the Day of Pentecost was a fulfilment of both Old Testament prophecy and Jesus’ promise. Nothing about the Day of Pentecost can be repeated in today’s church. It was a one-off manifestation of the Holy Spirit. It was a dramatic introduction of His power to and for the church. How many do we know, claiming to have the Gift of Tongues, who have immediately won thousands to Christ? Instead the Pentecostal church, like all so-called Bible-believing denomination, is full of lazy Christians who are ashamed of the Gospel. History proves that it has been men and women who were truly filled with the Spirit that have preached the Gospel, brought revival, gone on the missionary field, and done powerful things for God. If ‘tongues’ is the ‘initial evidence’ of the baptism of the Spirit, then it has achieved very little. The nations of this world once again need men and women of faith and boldness to stand up and preach the truth under the anointing of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:14).

The Acts of the Holy Spirit

Immediately upon receiving the power of the Holy Spirit, the first church was able to make great advances with regards to the preaching of the Gospel. Signs and wonders followed the disciples just as Jesus had promised (Mark 16:15-18). We have already noted the effects of this power on the Day of Pentecost, in this study we will take a brief look at some remarkable events listed in the Acts of the Apostles.

Peter and John

Fear of the religious leaders had obviously disappeared from the believers at Jerusalem since receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, for in Acts 3:1-10 we find Peter and John going to the Temple at the hour of prayer. This boldness could have only come from the Spirit of God. As they entered the gate of the Temple, a lame beggar asked them for some money, but Peter replied, “Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk” (Acts 3:6). The man was instantly healed and went “into the temple, walking, and leaping, and praising God” (Acts 3:8). This powerful healing caused a crowd to gather around Peter and John, who used the situation to preach about the saving power of the risen Lord Jesus (Acts 3:11-26).

Though the religious leaders threatened, beat, and imprisoned the believers for preaching about the Lord Jesus Christ, they continued to do so (Acts 4:18). The same Peter, who through fear denied the Lord, now boldly declared himself to be a follower of the Christ they had crucified. The only thing that transformed him was the power of the Spirit. He, along with the other disciples, became zealous in telling others about the Saviour.

Ananias and Sapphira

Too often, within some circles of the church, receiving the Holy Spirit is simply show and entertainment. People so easily disregarded the fact that they are dealing with the ‘Holy’ Spirit. This was true regarding Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11). They appeared to have little respect for God or His word, for they must have heard the same teaching as the other believers (Acts 2:42). They chose to lie to the Holy Spirit even after being warned by Peter. “Satan filled” their “heart to lie to the Holy Ghost” (Acts 5:3), therefore the Holy Spirit had to

take action against them, if He had not done so this sin would have destroyed the church at its roots.

Stephen

Chapter 6 of Acts introduces us to Stephen who was “full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom” (:3), and “full of faith and power” who did “great wonders and miracles among the people” (:8). Stephen, though only a deacon, was used mightily by the Holy Spirit. He preached the word of God fearlessly even in the face of death. This fact must have angered Satan, for he inspired the religious leaders to arrest and kill Stephen (Acts 7).

Philip

Another deacon, Philip, was also a Spirit-filled preacher of the Gospel (Acts 8). He not only preached, but performed miracles, and cast out devils. One of the notable manifestations of the Holy Spirit in his life was when he was transported from Gaza to Azotus (Acts 8:39-40) after preaching to and baptising the Ethiopian eunuch.

Simon the Magician

When Philip invited the apostles to Samaria, to lay hands on the new believers so that they might receive the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17), Simon, who had not given up his witchcraft, said he was willing to buy this spiritual power from Peter (8:9-11, 13, 18-19). Peter said to him, “Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity” (Acts 8:20-23). We do not know if he did repent (:24).

Saul

Saul of Tarsus, who became known as Paul, was a persecutor of Christians until he met the Lord on the Damascus Road (Acts 8:1; 9:1-22). He was blinded by the heavenly vision, but was healed three days later as Ananias laid his hands upon him. At the same time he received the baptism in the Holy Spirit. Ananias said to him, “Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be

filled with the Holy Ghost” (Acts 9:17). So Paul was transformed by Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit. He became the greatest of missionary the world has known. He, by the inspiration of the Spirit, wrote many letters that have become the source of much of the church’s teaching.

Cornelius

In Acts chapter 10 we read of a Roman centurion named Cornelius. He was a very religious man who revered the God of the Jews. He gave gifts to the Jews and spent much time in prayer. In a vision, an angel told him to send for the apostle Peter (Acts 10:1-7). The Holy Spirit was also speaking to Peter about those who were coming to visit him, of their request, and commanded that he should go with them (Acts 10:9-20). Peter taught Cornelius and his household about salvation through Christ. While he was doing so, they were baptised in the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44). Peter knew it was real because they began to speak in tongues (Acts 10:45-46). This is sometimes known as the Gentile Pentecost. Now the Holy Spirit’s ministry was for all people ... “And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 10:45).

Conclusion

There are other mighty outpourings of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts (see chapter 19 for instance), but we have noted that the early church experienced great moves of the Spirit. Such manifestations continued throughout the first century, but as with all of God’s gifts to the church, man either legalised the ministry of the Spirit, rejected it, or abused it. We need His ministry today!

Believed and Received

An important question has to be answered if we are to fully understand what it means to be baptised in the Holy Spirit. Does a believer receive the Holy Spirit at the moment of conversion? There have been heated arguments for and against the teaching that baptism in the Holy Spirit as a second work of grace. These disagreements are mainly the consequence of a misapplication of Scripture and a desire to hold onto denominational theories. Our guide in answering this question must always be the Scriptures, and allowing it to speak for itself.

Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?

The apostle Paul, on his missionary trip to Ephesus, asked twelve disciples of John the Baptist a question whose answer would dynamically transform their lives. “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” (Acts 19:2). The reply he received is remarkable and appears to cut right through modern theories about the Holy Spirit. They said, “We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost” (Acts 19:2). These believers were converted through John’s baptism (Acts 19:3). It is obvious that they had left Israel before the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ had begun, so therefore had no knowledge of Him or the coming of the Holy Spirit. This is proven by the fact that after they had heard Paul say, “John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus ... they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:4-5). Then Paul “laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6).

Some teach that this baptism was subsequent to their acceptance of Christ as Saviour, but the passage does not prove this to be so. They had received the baptism of repentance under John’s ministry, but because of incomplete teaching (see :4) they needed believer’s baptism. There is a momentary delay between them actually receiving Christ and being baptised in the Spirit, but this in itself does not mean that they had not been filled with the Spirit at conversion. If they did not receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit the moment they were saved then they were in fact not saved at all ... “Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin; but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall

also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans 8:9-11). But does the text not say that they were filled with the Holy Spirit after being saved? Let’s look again at the verse in question.

The Holy Ghost came upon them

“And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6). There is a vast difference between being indwelt by the Holy Spirit and having Him come upon us. It is a false teaching that suggests that these Ephesian believers received the Holy Spirit in person at the laying on of hands. Paul’s initial question, “Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?” must be understood in term of the power rather than the person of the Spirit. Paul would not have meant nor done anything contrary to what was practiced by the Apostles of Jesus. Peter had previously laid hands on the Samaritan believers to receive the Holy Spirit, Simon the magician also wanted to receive the “power” (Acts 8:19). Once again the text says that the Holy Spirit came upon rather than indwelling them ... “For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 8:16). To be saved they needed quickening presence of the Holy Spirit, but now they received what we term ‘the baptism in the Holy Spirit.’ Paul must have laid hands on the Ephesians for this reason to, otherwise he contradicts himself by writing, “No man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians 12:3). At conversion the Holy Spirit begins to abide in the believer, but a second work of grace follows which is known as being baptised in the Spirit. This second work, which can and should immediately follow salvation, empowers the believer for service.

Though the original apostles believed and were saved, they had to wait for the baptism of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. In the upper room Jesus “breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22), but just moments before His ascension He said to them, “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence ... ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (Acts 1:5,8). Believers do not drink but immerse themselves in the water of baptism. In the same way, Pentecost was the disciple’s immersion in the Spirit rather than receiving Him in person. The text says that the Spirit would come “upon” the waiting believers. This is in full agreement with what Jesus promised ... “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). It must

follow then, that baptism in the Spirit is actually receiving divine power. The “promise” (Luke 24:49) and the “gift” (Acts 8:20; 10:44) must be one and the same, that is, the endowment of power.

Acts 2:4 does tell us that on the Day of Pentecost “they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,” but the infilling must be understood in light of what all the Scriptures which relate to this text teach, otherwise there will be contradiction and confusion. Would Paul write to the Ephesian Christians, after he had already brought them to Christ, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18) if they were already indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Once again the “power” of the Spirit is being referred to. Instead of being filled with the power of intoxicating wine, all believers need the influencing power of the Spirit.

Conclusion

Why was the Holy Spirit given if the disciples already believed in Christ and must have had the life-changing power of the Spirit? Jesus taught, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38), but “this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified” (John 7:39). When compared with other Scriptures we clearly see that it is the power of the Holy Spirit that is being referred to. This divine power is for service – to make believers effective witnesses, exactly as Jesus indicated (ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 2:8), and exactly what happened on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2).

Spiritual Gifts

As with most teaching regarding the Holy Spirit, the Spiritual Gifts have caused a great deal of conflict amongst believers. Some reject them, stating that they ceased to exist after the apostles died. Others accept them as part of the Holy Spirit's ministry in the church today, but abuse and misuse them. The main area of contention concerns the use of the Gift of Tongues. The Bible does not state that the Gifts ceased, but nor does it teach that Tongues is the (only) initial evidence of the Baptism in the Spirit. In this study we are not going to debate the Cessation Theory, since we believe that the Gifts are for today. Before we examine the Gifts of the Spirit, we need to state certain facts regarding them. The apostle Paul wrote, "Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant" (1 Corinthians 12:1), and it is certain that many believers are ignorant through lack of teaching or willing ignorant by not accepting the teaching of these vital truths.

The Giver of the Gifts

It is important to note that the Holy Spirit is the Giver of the Gifts. None of them are legitimately exercised when coming from the will of man, showmanship, or conformity to common practice within a church. "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (1 Corinthians 12:11). Far too often the Holy Spirit has no part in the so-called manifestations in certain quarters. The Gifts must always be inspired by the Spirit.

The Greek words used

The Greek word translated in 1 Corinthians 12:1 as "spiritual gifts" is 'pneumatikton' which means 'spiritual matters.' Since this chapter concerns the Gifts of the Spirit, we know that they must be the spiritual matters in question. There are two words which are used in reference to the Gifts. The first is 'charisma' from which the Charismatic Movement derives its name, but scripturally highlights the fact that each of the Gifts is products of God's grace rather than coming as a result of personal merit. The second word is 'phanerosis,' which literally means 'a manifestation.' Spiritual manifestations are open and visible by their very nature, which in turn implies that none of the Gifts are secretive.

For all the Church

Every one of the Gifts of the Spirit is for the whole Body of Christ (the Church). They are meant for our spiritual good, for they are “given to every man to profit withal” (1 Corinthians 12:7). This the reason why “God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues” (1 Corinthians 12:28). Each of the Gifts is important to the Church, and none of them should be exalted over the rest. Some view the Gift of Tongues as being the most important, while others hold it to be the least. The fact is the most important Gift is the one the Holy Spirit chooses to utilise at any given moment. Because of abuse or neglect some Gifts are considered controversial, but this should not hinder us believing that the Holy Spirit can still make Himself known in such ways.

Some state that the Gifts were only for the first-century church, but Paul does not say that they are for a part of the church at some point in history. By dismissing the legitimacy of the Gifts theologians and preachers make the church something quite different from the one Christ intended. Instead of it being the Spirit-empowered Body of Christ, it has become merely a human organisation going through a series of religious motions. Without the Holy Spirit, those who attend such places, have little or no impact, and no power to live spiritually in Christ Jesus.

Part of the Great Commission

The Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:19-20 ... “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world,” but Mark’s version of this should not be ignore ... “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:15-18). If we are to be obedient to our Lord then we must “observe all things” that He has taught us. Failure to do so is the reason why the Holy Spirit is not moving in countless churches, missionary societies, and ministries. Until

the world is fully evangelised, or Christ returns, the church is responsible for teaching the whole truth as found in Scripture. A Christian or church trying to operate without the Gifts of the Spirit will never fulfil the destiny the Lord Jesus Christ intended for them.

Conclusion

In this short study we should have come to terms with the vital importance of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. We can condense the whole issue into one pertinent question, “Am I, as a believer, willing to believe all of God’s word?” Do not answer this question by making reference to some living or dead theologian, pastor, or writer, for some of these teach “for doctrines the commandments of men” (Matthew 15:9), and are “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth” (2 Timothy 3:7). Instead, turn to Him who is “the Spirit of Truth” for He “will guide you into all truth” (John 16:13).

The Gifts of the Spirit

The Gifts of the Spirit as described in 1 Corinthians 12:1-31 can be separated into three classifications:

1. *Revelation Gifts*. These are the Word of Wisdom, the Word of Knowledge, and Discerning of Spirits. In many situations there would be an overlapping of these gifts, in other words any two could work simultaneously. Through these gifts the Holy Spirit gives supernatural insight.

2. *Power Gifts*. These are Faith, Gifts of Healings, and Miracles. These gifts can also operate simultaneously. Through these gifts the Holy Spirit gives supernatural power.

3. *Inspiration Gifts*. These are Prophecy, Tongues, and Interpretation of Tongues. As with the other classifications, these gifts operate simultaneously. Through these gifts the Holy Spirit gives supernatural communication.

The simultaneous operation of these gifts is not confined to their classifications, for the Word of Knowledge may work alongside Miracles, or the Word of Knowledge may operate at the same time as Prophecy.

The Gifts

1. *Revelation Gifts*

a) Word of Wisdom

We all need wisdom to live the Christian lives on a daily basis. This kind of wisdom can be termed 'common wisdom.' In a chapter dealing with everyday life as a Christian, James writes, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). This wisdom is not the same as the Word of Wisdom. The Word of Wisdom is the mind of God revealed to the believer. It may relate to some future event, thus operating with Prophecy, or to some situation that appears to have no remedy.

b) Word of Knowledge

The Word of Knowledge is not natural intellect or common knowledge learned through experience. This gift reveals the mind of God for certain people, situations, places and events. Usually the Word of Knowledge deals with things of the present or past. Through this gift the prophet Elisha was shown exactly where the Syrian army was located, so delivering Israel from defeat (2 Kings 6:8-23). Peter had revealed to him the secret dealings of Ananias and Sapphira

by way of supernatural knowledge (Acts 5:1-11).

c) Discerning of Spirits.

This gift is seen operating alongside the Word of Knowledge. This is not natural discernment that is used as when we make moral choices, evaluate circumstances, and situational ethics, instead is a Gift of the Holy Spirit that is given the moment it is needed. The believer is given an immediate sense of the motivating force behind a person or beneath the surface of a particular situation. It often means that he is given the ability to look beyond the natural into the spiritual world, that is, a spiritual awareness of the activity of demons at that moment.

2. *Power Gifts*

a) Gift of Faith

Every believer knows that he or she needs to grow in faith. The faith that we need on an everyday basis is derived from accepting that the Scriptures are true ... "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17). The Gift of Faith is different from ordinary faith; it is a special faith that is given for a particular situation. Some have described this as 'surge' of assurance and confidence that a certain thing will come to pass. This special faith was referred to by the Lord Jesus Christ in Matthew 17:20, and is seen operating in Elijah in 1 Kings 17.

b) Gifts of Healings

It is certain that this gift often includes the gifts of Faith and Miracles. In James 5:14 -15 we read how the prayer of faith can bring about the healing of a sick person. There are countless references to divine healing in both Testaments.

c) Working of Miracles

Every believer understands what a miracle is. Simply defined, it is the divine suspension of the natural order of things, such as walking on water, changing water into wine, raising the dead, and feeding 5,000 with a few morsels of food. We should understand though, that miracles are natural with God.

3. *Inspiration Gifts*

a) Gift of Prophecy

Prophecy, by itself, is a supernatural speech in a known language. In the Old Testament, and certain places in the New, it refers to forecasting or foretelling the future, i.e. the Prophets, Revelation and the sermons of Christ on Last Days events. Prophecy in the New Testament largely relates to the preaching of God's

word, or forthtelling.

b) The Gift of Tongues

This is the most controversial of all the gifts. Here we will limit ourselves to describing the gift, but in our next study we will look at the theory that suggests that the gifts (including tongues) have ceased. The Gift of Tongues normally means preaching God's Word in an unknown (unlearned) language, as on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). It may work with Prophecy to give Knowledge, Wisdom, or Discernment about future things. This is the public side of tongues. According to 1 Corinthians 14:2 there is a devotional (private) aspect of tongues also.

c) Interpretation of Tongues

Plainly stated, all public words in Tongues must be interpreted into the common tongue so that others can know what the Spirit is saying. The Gift of Tongues is of no use if there is no Interpretation (1 Corinthians 14:6-9).

Conclusion

The Gifts, regardless of one's theological position, are powerful manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the church of Christ. Though each one can be in operation independent of the others, very often they work simultaneously. Even here God has unity and order. That the Gifts are available today will be proven in our next study.

Have the Gifts of the Spirit Ceased?

Many theologians and Bible teachers reject the idea that God still gives supernatural gifts to the church today. “God does not give supernatural gifts to Christians today,” they would say, “those gifts were only for the time of the Old Testament and Jesus and the apostles.” Why do these men hold such a view? What Scriptures or reasons do they give against the use of the spiritual gifts for today? Those who believe that the supernatural gifts have ceased usually raise the following objections:

First Objection

The supernatural gifts were only for the time of the apostles to authenticate the apostle’s message. The Bible teaches that this was the purpose of supernatural gifts. “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him; God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?” (Hebrews 2:3-4). Once the gospel was firmly established in the Roman Empire and the apostles died, the supernatural gifts ceased. Therefore they were no longer necessary.

This objection is flawed for the following reasons:

- a) Authentication of the gospel message was definitely one of the purposes of the miraculous gifts, but it is only one of the purposes. We are also told in other Scriptures that spiritual gifts are given to serve the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:7; 14:26), to equip people to share the gospel (Matthew 10:19-20; Luke 4:18; 1 Corinthians 2:13; Mark 16:15-18), and to show God’s compassion and concern for His people (Matthew 14:13-14; 20:29-34; Mark 1:40-42). Surely these needs still exist today.
- b) The “supernatural” gifts were not just the possession of the apostles in the Bible. Other non-apostles also were given supernatural gifts by the Spirit, for example Luke 9:49-50 or Philip’s use of the gifts in Acts 8:6-7, 13.
- c) The Scriptures don’t seem to make any distinction between what we call the “supernatural” gifts and the other “less” supernatural gifts (they appear mixed together in Romans 12:6-8 and 1 Corinthians 12:28). If we are going to deny the operation of “supernatural” gifts in this day, then it seems logical to deny all the

gifts of the Spirit mentioned in these passages.

Second Objection

The Bible actually tells us that supernatural gifts will cease ... “Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away” (1 Corinthians 13:8-10.) It is clear that this passage predicts the gifts of prophecy and tongues will not continue. In verse 10, Paul says that once the ‘perfect’ is come, tongues will cease. What could be more perfect than the Bible? When the last New Testament book was written the need for supernatural revelation ended. At that time prophecy, tongues and the other supernatural gifts ceased.

This objection is flawed for the following reasons:

- a) Where do we get the idea that the “perfect” is the Bible? This seems to be reading something into verse 10 which is not there. It ignores the context. A completely reasonable interpretation for ‘perfect’ can seem to be found in verse 12. The “perfect” is not the completion of the Bible, but when we see God “face to face” and “know even as also [we are] known.” This happens upon our death or at the time of Christ’s Second Coming. That is the time that the imperfect will be done away with (:10). There will not be any need for spiritual gifts in the presence of the Lord.
- b) If tongues and prophecy ended when the Bible was completed then so did “knowledge” if we adopt such reasoning.

Conclusion

It is theoretically possible that all the supernatural gifts ceased at the close of the apostolic age, but it is the Holy Spirit not theory who determines the cessation or continuance of the gifts. It is the Holy Spirit is the one who wills what gifts are given and who receives them (1 Corinthians 12:11), so if He wished to stop giving supernatural gifts, He certainly could. What man can say that the Spirit must give supernatural gifts to Christians in the 21st century? However, nowhere does the Bible teach that supernatural gifts will cease in a later age. It is the position of Living Word Bible Church that we need to be open to all the ministrations of the Holy Spirit. Paul himself told the Thessalonians not to quench prophecies, a supernatural gift (1 Thessalonians 5:19-22). He wrote the

Corinthians to “Wherefore, brethren, covet to prophesy, and forbid not to speak with tongues” (1 Corinthians 14:39). His only caution was that all gifts should be tested rather than just gullibly accepted (:29) and “Let all things be done decently and in order” (:40). That still seems to be good advice.

Our Vital Need

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight” (Acts 1:8-9).

Introduction

The Lord Jesus Christ prepared His followers for His departure from this world, but promised them the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. They would need the Holy Spirit for the days that lay ahead, for the world, the flesh and the devil would do their utmost against them. Satan would do all in his power to stamp out this fledgling church.

Our need

We face exactly the same spiritual conflicts as the first century church, and it is certain that we need the same Holy Spirit to empower us. The enemy of our souls is just as cruel, just as cunning, and just as capable today as he ever was ... “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world” (1 Peter 5:8-9). But it is possible, through the Spirit, to stand our ground against him ... “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you” (James 4:7). The blessing of continuous victory has been given to believers.

Many Christians have settled for a life of spiritual defeat instead of victory. This is because they look at the power of the enemy instead of the almighty power of God. Our need today is one of trust in the Pentecostal promise of Christ.

Ye shall receive power

Christ did not leave His church to hold their own, but gave them the power of the Spirit so that they could actively promote the cause of His Kingdom. He expected them to boldly march through this world with the message of the everlasting gospel, thus saving the lost from the devil.

To a large extent the church has failed to obey the Lord, for she allows multitudes to career into Hell without warning. There is no excuse for us! The

failure is undoubtedly due to a lack of spiritual power. If the church is to be successful then it must return to apostolic Christianity and its supernatural power.

Did Jesus get it wrong?

Did the Lord make an error of judgement when He promised His followers the power of the Holy Spirit? Did He miscalculate things when He left the work of the Kingdom to mere mortal men? This would indeed be the case if He left them with only their natural powers to get the job done. He did not leave them to face the powers of religion and politics alone, but sent His Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to assist, empower, and anoint them at every level.

Do we not have the same worldly power against us in our day also? Worldly standards and customs, worldly religions, satanic powers, and fleshly lust that endeavour to overthrow us are faced on a daily basis. Yet Christ expects us to set the captives free ... “That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth” (Isaiah 49:9), and to make His Kingdom glorious ... “And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed” (Daniel 2:44). Jesus neither expected too much of us, or underestimated the power of our foe. No, His calculations were accurate. The work can be accomplished. Souls can be saved. The secret of such victory is the filling of the Holy Spirit ... “Be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18).

Conclusion

“Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you.” Here is the divine promise of victorious power. Without it, it is sheer folly to think that we can be successful as Christian workers. It is our responsibility to have such power come upon us. We have to present ourselves before His presence in much the same way as the 120 waiting disciples did. The bottom line is this, countless unsaved souls demand that we get such an infilling of power from the Spirit of God ... “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:18-20).

Seeking the Blessing

The Lord Jesus Christ promised to give His disciples a powerful blessing as long as they met the conditions ... “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me” (Acts 1:4). Many Christians know about this outpouring of the Holy Spirit and understand that the blessing is for them too, but they have gone no further than this. They have not apprehended this gift for themselves. They are still without the blessing which would make their lives holy, joyous and powerful in and for the Lord.

A Simple Command

About 500 followers of Jesus witnessed His ascension into Heaven (1 Corinthians 15:6), and so must have heard Him speak of the coming Holy Spirit. He told them, “Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). That is all they needed to do, yet out of that number only 120 were willing to obey the Lord’s command. The other 380 Christians must have loved the Lord, but they did not receive the power of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost.

Many Excuses

Just like Bible-believing Christians today, those first followers of Jesus would have made a number of excuses for not obeying the Lord:

- a) There were family concerns to attend to first.
- b) They had important business to attend to.
- c) Surely it is possible to receive the blessing at another time and in another place.
- d) Family, friends and neighbours would ridicule me.
- e) I already believe in Christ as Saviour, I’m saved, that’s all that matters.

Many believers soothe their consciences with feeble excuses for not obeying the Lord’s command. They think they will be labelled a fanatic or charismatic if they receive the power of the Holy Spirit for Christian service. They may claim that they already have the power of the Spirit, but where is the evidence? How many unsaved souls are being transformed into saints through their personal witness? There is a difference between receiving the Holy Spirit at conversion and

receiving His power. Prior to Pentecost the disciples had already received the Holy Spirit ... “He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22), but they still needed to tarry for the “Power from on high” (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:5-8).

What’s your excuse?

Someone once said that excuses are sugar-coated lies. Excuses are so very easy to make, but none of them excuse us from obeying any of the Lord’s commands. What excuses do we have ...

- a) For being joyless when we might be exultant?
- b) For being unclean when we might be holy?
- c) For being cold of heart when we might be zealous?
- d) For being weak when we might be valiant soldiers of the cross?

We will never advance from the pew if we continually make excuses for not receiving the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This has nothing to do with modern-day Pentecostalism or the so-called Charismatic Movement, for the outpouring of the Spirit is available to those who truly believe in Christ. The others may think that the evidence of this is speaking in Tongues, but the true manifestation of the Holy Spirit is evidenced in the power of a changed life, and in a boldness to proclaim the Gospel (Acts 2:1-47). When the 120 received such power 3,000 souls got saved!

Conclusion

So what if the majority in the church do not see the need to receive this power of the Spirit? Should we align ourselves with the 380 who did not obey, or with the 120 who did? Let’s shake off all excuses and past failures. Let’s look beyond the excesses and abuses by seeing what the Scriptures actually say on this matter. We need to press forward with holy determination. Let us see if there be “any Holy Ghost” or not (Acts 19:2). It will cost us, but we will be full of the Holy Ghost and power.

The Negative Aspect of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit

“And when He is come, He will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement: of sin, because they believe not on me; of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; of judgement, because the prince of this world is judged (John 16:8-11).

Introduction

In these words we have the moral history of the entire world – Sin, Redemption through the Blood of Christ, and the ultimate defeat of Satan. In the Old Testament we find the dispensation of the Father, that is, God for men. In the Gospels we see the dispensation of the Son, that is, God with men. From the Day of Pentecost onwards we have the dispensation of the Holy Spirit, that is, God in men. God’s great ideal has always been to have His presence abiding within men.

The negative work of the Holy Spirit

The members of the Trinity have the highest interest in our salvation. The Father conceived the plan, the Son carried it out, and the Holy Spirit applies it. The Holy Spirit does this in three areas:

a) *Reprove the world of sin*

The Holy Spirit convicts the sinner of the awful reality of his sin. At the root of all sin is unbelief, or the rejection of Jesus Christ as Saviour. Therefore the answer to all the world’s problems is Christ, and it is He whom the Holy Spirit sets forth as the true Messiah. This may not be society’s remedy for its social ills, but it is God’s. All sin is coming “short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). Liberals and do-gooders rename sin as “misdirection,” a “lack of education,” or “disease,” but in doing so they try to put the problem beyond the reach of both the power of the Blood and of the Spirit. The Scribes and Pharisees of today are guilty of sin in its wickedest form. The remedy for sin is faith in Christ. To the question, “What must I do to be saved?” Paul answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house” (Acts 16:30-31). It was for this very reason the Lord Jesus Christ was willing to die on the cross ... “He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this

purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil” (1 John 3:8). The Holy Spirit points a miserable, sin-bedaubed world to the only one who can cleanse them from evil.

b) And of righteousness

The Holy Spirit imparts righteousness to the one who exercises faith in Christ Jesus. All are born the sons of Adam and inherit his sin nature, but Christians are reborn through the power of the Spirit, thus they become the children of God. Jesus ascended to the Father so that the Holy Spirit could be sent. When the Holy Spirit was poured out He made men holy through the efficiency of the sacrifice of Christ. He brought believers into a life of righteousness. This righteousness is not a veneer, instead it is a true righteousness of the heart. He enables us to walk “in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life” (Luke 1:75). He guides us to live in holiness and righteousness.

c) And of judgement

This is the judgement that has already come. Satan is a defeated foe, clinging to the last vestures of his dying strength. “Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world” (1 John 4:4) because “we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God” (1 Corinthians 2:12). We have one within us who is altogether almighty. Jesus said that He had “Beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,” adding “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you” (Luke 10:18-19). The moment Satan rebelled, judgement upon him was passed. He has been conquered by Christ, and He gives His church victory over him. The Holy Spirit teaches us that we are no longer under the dominion of the devil.

Conclusion

What will it take to change the hearts and lives of those we come into contact with each day? What is needed is just a few men and women, who are filled with the Spirit, to reach out in faith and obedience. The same Holy Spirit that convicted us of sin, righteousness, and judgement can do so with other sinners too.

The Positive Aspect of the Ministry of the Holy Spirit

“Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak: and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall show it unto you” (John 16:13-14).

Introduction

To enjoy real results in our spiritual life both the negative and positive aspects of the ministry of the Holy Spirit have to work within us. Everything in science has to have both these sides combined. For example the negative and positive are needed to produce energy. Maybe this is the reason why believers are powerless today.

The New Birth

At the new birth the Holy Spirit cleanses the believer from past sins, the negative aspect, but also empowers him to walk in “newness of life,” the positive aspect (Romans 6:4). If we accept only the negative then we will not be able to live the Spirit-filled life. On the night of His resurrection the Lord met with His disciples. We are informed that He breathed on them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). Here we see the regenerating ministry of the Holy Spirit at work, but they still needed to receive His power for dynamic living on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). It was not the Lord’s will for them to receive one without the other.

Sanctification

The initial stage of sanctification involves the Holy Spirit ministering to us the blessing of a clean heart, but we must move on from simply being cleansed, we must go on to being “filled with the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:19). At the first He brings purity into our hearts, but His power enables the regenerated soul to receive a constant flow of the same purity.

Growth

As Christians we are to daily grow in grace. This is accomplished by walking in

holiness, that is, staying clean from moment to moment. Nevertheless, growth includes staying filled with the Spirit too. What happened on and after the Day of Pentecost is proof that the disciples were growing in the Spirit and power. Before then, even though they were regenerated, they were timid and fearful, but now they boldly spoke about Christ (John 20:19; Acts 2; 9:29). The amazing result was that they turned Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and eventually the world “upside down” (Acts 17:6). Paul advises his readers to “be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians 5:18). The Greek here implies being filled on a constant basis or ‘be being filled.’ In Acts 1:8 the same meaning can be found in the Lord’s words when He said, “Ye shall be receiving power continuously after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you” (*italics added for emphasis*).

Conclusion

If the followers of Jesus needed this aspect of the Holy Spirit’s ministry, how much more to we have the need today? It is not the cults, pagans and evolutionists that are damning the world, it is the powerless church. How? We claim to be Christians but manifest not of its power ... “Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof” (2 Timothy 3:5). We live half-hearted worldly lives, when we might be winning souls for Christ by the glorious power of the Holy Spirit. The continuous reception and transmission of the power of God is the great privilege of the child of God.

With the privilege comes the responsibility. Note the order, “For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call” (Acts 2:39):-

1. The promise of both salvation and the power of the Spirit are for you. We are responsible for receiving the promise ourselves.
2. We are then responsible for transmitting these things to our children. This is a power legacy to leave to one’s children.
3. Then same blessings are available to those further afield. In the Lord our reach is never limited by circumstances personal inability ... “Is my hand shortened at all, that it cannot redeem? or have I no power to deliver?” (Isaiah 50:2).
4. This great promise is for everyone who accepts Jesus Christ as Lord.

The Holy Spirit and the church should be united in calling the lost to Christ ... “And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17). This is the Holy Spirit working through the church.

Living in the Spirit

Throughout the Old Testament we find one major problem that continually hindered man from experiencing full fellowship with God. “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it” (Jeremiah 17: 9), and out of the heart comes all manner of sin. Nevertheless God also gave a special promise that would remedy the problem forever: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. (Ezekiel 36:26-27).

God's Power Within

“Behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49). When the Holy Spirit was outpoured on the Church, He fulfilled every detail of the Father's promise in Ezekiel 36. The Spirit's infinite power was given to the believer so that he could live a life pleasing to God. The Spirit does this by:

- 1) *Delivering us from the power of sin* ... “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death” (Romans 8:1-2).
- 2) *Making us right in God's sight* ... “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. (Titus 3: 5-7).
- 3) *Giving us immediate access to the Father* ... “For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father” (Ephesians 2:18).
- 4) *Empowering us* ... “That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man ... And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:16,19-20).

All Power

Now, with the Holy Spirit living inside, the believer has all power – out of the treasure house of God’s vast “riches” – to live the way God wants him to live (2 Corinthians 4:7). But there is also something required of the believer to do: We are encouraged to appropriate what the Holy Spirit has given us. “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Walking in the Spirit

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would” (Galatians 5:16-17). We have been given the Holy Spirit, but He is only works in our lives as we allow Him to. We are not only to receive the Holy Spirit (John 20:22), but are to “walk in the Spirit” (Galatians 5:25) – to live under His presence and allow Him to have full influence over our daily lives. This “walk” in the Spirit is also described as:

1) *Walking in the Light* ... “If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. (1 John 1:6-7).

2. *Walking in Love* ... “Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;
2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.” (Ephesians 5: 1-2).

3. *Walking in Faith* ... “For we walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). The Holy Spirit works in the believer by prompting and encouraging him toward the kind of life He wants him to live (1 Thessalonians 2:12; 4:1-8). If we respond, the Holy Spirit is released to do a work of change in our lives, so that we grow to be more like Him (2 Corinthians 3:18). If, however, a person deliberately chooses to resist the Spirit’s promptings, he can, in successive stages, end up:

a) Grieving the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).

b) Quenching the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

c) Insulting the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 10:29).

Conclusion

The Holy Spirit birthed us into a new life in God, and now it is the Spirit who helps us live that life. As we live in Him we experience the “life and peace” (Romans 8:6) that we were created for, and it is as we walk under his covering that the fruits of the Spirit, as well as His gifts, begin to operate.

The Fruit of the Spirit

“I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). A part of the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to manifest the character of Jesus in us. The Bible depicts this as being like the fruit of a plant. Jesus Himself used the vine to illustrate an important truth: the fruit of the Spirit grows out of our relationship with Him. A branch cannot bear fruit unless it is joined to the vine, therefore He is the source of our spiritual life.

The Fruit of the Spirit

“But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (Galatians 5:22-23). The fruit mentioned in this verse are not just the natural product of circumstances around us. Even when things are not going great, the Holy Spirit can develop His fruit in us (see John 7:38-39).

1) Love

Love is manifested in giving of yourself for the good of others. The greatest expression of love is found in the Lord. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world that He gave.” The fruit of love is an expression through the Holy Spirit of God’s own nature of love, and the quality of that love is described beautifully in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7: “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

2) Joy

“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full” (John 15:10-11). The joy that comes from the Holy Spirit is not dependent on how happy we feel, but on the character of God. Everyone in the world are searching for happiness, but it can only be found in the supernatural joy of the Holy Spirit (see also Nehemiah 8:10; Psalm 16: 11; 132: 16; Isaiah 12:3; 35: 10;

Romans 14:17; Philippians 4:4).

3) *Peace*

Peace is that quality which everyone desires but only the child of God can truly experience. It is God's peace imparted to us by His Spirit – "the God of peace" (Romans 15:33), and is designed to operate even in times of trouble (see John 14:27). "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

4) *Longsuffering*

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness" (Colossians 1:11). Longsuffering or patience is that ability given by the Holy Spirit to trust in the promises of God. It is not a passive emotion, but is in actual fact an expression of faith and the Christian's strength that comes from the Spirit. Patience comes when we begin to see things the way God sees them (2 Peter 3:8-9 & Ephesians 4:2).

5) *Gentleness*

This fruit is expressed in the loving acceptance of those around us. An attitude of intolerance always leads to broken relationships. The word "gentleness" comes from the same root word that "kindred" comes from- and points to a quality of relationship similar to that found in a close-knit, loving family. "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

6) *Goodness*

Goodness, as a fruit of the Spirit, is that purity of heart which produces virtuous behaviour. The child of God has received, through the Holy Spirit, a new heart (Hebrews 8:10). The fruit of goodness in our daily dealings with people can be maintained by keeping our heart pure before God.

7) *Faith*

Faith or faithfulness is one of the most important virtues in the Christian life. It begins in our relationship with God, and then overflows into our relationship with others. God is absolutely faithful (Psalm 36:5; 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Timothy 2:13), and it is His desire that through the Spirit that faithfulness will become a part of our character also.

8) *Meekness*

The two men renowned most for the fruit of meekness were the Lord Jesus Christ and Moses (see Numbers 12:3; 1 Peter 2:21-23). Both were great deliverers – Moses for the nation of Israel, and Jesus for the whole world. This shows that meekness is not weakness but the strength of being self-controlled. The world's attitude toward strength is to aggressively defend yourself, but real strength is found in a meek spirit – an attitude of being able to receive a wrong without retaliating or demanding your rights. “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls” (Matthew 11:29).

9) *Temperance*

“He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls” (Proverbs 25:28). This is the crowning fruit of the Spirit because it is the evidence of a mature Christian life. “For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit” (Romans 8:5).

Conclusion

It is important to see the Fruit of the Spirit as one fruit containing nine segments. Viewed in this light we clearly see that all parts of the fruit should be manifest in our lives. It is impossible to have some and not the rest. The Fruit of the Spirit are given by God to enable us to mature in Christ.

The Christian's Life and Spiritual Power

The fact that a Christian has received the baptism of the Holy Spirit must be manifested in his daily life. The most obvious manifestation is the believer's Christlike character and behaviour, in that he has evidence of the Fruit of the Spirit. We could say that the daily life of such a one as this is full of joyful holiness and power. The Holy Spirit is working into believers exactly what He did in the first century church. The Spirit-filled man or woman should closely resemble the description found in Acts 2:44-47:

“And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

Unity

“All that believed were together.” It is not possible for the church to know the fullness of the Spirit until there is true unity and fellowship. Where there is bitterness and contention there will be disunity. Minor differences must be laid aside and forgotten, while major ones ought to be worked through with brotherly love. Hearts that are occupied by the Holy Spirit cannot help being bound together in love and unity. For there to be unity believers must have mutual lowliness, forbearance and peace.

Self-sacrifice

“They had all things common.” The Holy Spirit frees the Christian from selfishness and covetousness. Self-centredness is replaced with self-sacrifice and generosity. Covetousness is replaced with a joyful willingness to assist others who may have material needs, even to the point of selling “possessions and goods.” There will be no hesitation about letting go of the things that others have more need of. This calls for self-denial on our part.

Love

This love is not in word only, but is both warm and practical. It “seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil” (1 Corinthians 13:5). This kind of love makes the believer to spend and be spent for the benefit of others. Such love can only be found where people are truly filled with the Holy Spirit. It is only through the Holy Spirit that we can love others as ourselves, and wholeheartedly love God.

Worship

God’s children love to draw near to Him, for they hunger to know more of His truth. They delight to converse with God in prayer and to praise Him both in public meeting and in private. The gathering together of the saints to worship God is never boring, instead it is glorious for the believer.

Joy

There was “gladness” in the hearts of the early church. The Holy Spirit filled them with the same joy He wants for us today (Romans 15:13; John 15:11). This joy filled their hearts even in the worst of tribulations (2 Corinthians 7:4). So it is that our joy can be “unspeakable and full of glory” (1 Peter 1:18).

Singleness of heart

There was no compromise amongst those who were filled with the Holy Spirit, for they served God with singleness of heart. They had laid everything upon the altar and refused to take it back. Their minds were set upon one thing – to fully know the Lord Jesus Christ. Their lives had one aim – to glorify God by preaching the truth to the lost.

Favour with all the people

It is a good thing to be a Christian in church or in private, but Christlikeness must be manifested as we interact with those who do not know the Lord too. Do sinners admire our lives? Do we live in a way that makes them envious enough to want the same blessing? The lost are more likely to respond to our words if they see us living the Christian life. In this way more will be added to the church.

Conclusion

The same Holy Spirit, who filled the believers of the early church, abides and works in us today. We must allow Him to live His life through us without any

hesitation on our part. He is able to manifest Himself through us in a mighty and powerful way, and thus bring glory and honour to the Lord Jesus Christ. As we permit Him to reign in us we will have the spiritual power to extend the Kingdom of God through the preaching of His word.

The Holy Spirit offered to all

There are two basic approaches to understanding the baptism of the Holy Spirit amongst those who do not yet have it:

1. Honest inquiry. Some will seek to understand what it means and if it applies to them. “And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?” (Acts 2:12).
2. Dishonest rejection. Others will not even bother to investigate the facts; instead they will put any manifestation of the Spirit down to natural causes, zeal or fanaticism. “Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine” (Acts 2:13).

A free gift

The apostle Peter responded to both the honest inquiry and the dishonest rejection of what took place on the Day of Pentecost. He makes his stand as the Holy Spirit enlightens his mind to the Scriptures and inspires his words while preaching. He declares the day’s events to be the gift of God that everyone can receive. “But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved ... Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:14-21, 38-39).

See what God can do

Those 120 fearful men and women were transformed into bold saints upon receiving the Holy Spirit. They were living proof of the dynamic power of God once a believer submits and obeys Him. A church or individual, filled with the Spirit, is the most convincing evidence to quench the arguments of sceptics. Who can gainsay one who has been indwelt and transformed by the Holy Spirit?

God promised

Peter revealed that what they were witnessing was the fulfilment of God's promise found in Joel 2:28-32. Who were they to argue against God's word! This promise is not limited to one day. In both Acts and Joel the word 'days' is used. Pentecost was only one of many such days for the Holy Spirit to be poured out into a believers life ... "For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:39).

Who can receive the promise?

The baptism of the Holy Spirit is for all who believe ... "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:21).

The believer must believe in the life of Christ, that is, He is the Son of God ... "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know" (Acts 2:22).

The believer must believe in the atoning death of Christ on the cross ... "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain" (Acts 2:23).

The believer must believe in the physical resurrection of Christ ... "Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24).

Unless a person has experienced salvation through the cleansing blood of Christ, he cannot receive the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit.

What is the promise for?

The Holy Spirit has not been given to entertain the church or the world. This power was given to the church to draw sinners to Christ. Those who asked, "What meaneth this?" later pleaded, "What shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). Sinners saved by grace can then receive the indwelling power of the Spirit in their lives

too.

What shall we do?

The answer to the question is the same as given by Peter ... “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost” (Acts 2:38). Yes, we may have already done this, but do we really believe in Christ? Do we believe that He will follow through with His promise? Do we believe that He can pour His Spirit upon us today?

Conclusion

If we are serious about wanting such a baptism then we must separate ourselves and walk in holiness ... “Save yourselves from this untoward generation” (Acts 2:40). In spite of past failure, fear, and fault, we can receive the promise in faith. Then we can expect God to use us in a powerful way.

Pentecost is Repeatable

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6).

The days in which we live are very similar to those of the prophet Zechariah. As Israel was held captive by Babylon, so the church, to a great extent, is captivated by the world. Just as then, the Lord God wants to restore His people through the power of His Holy Spirit. Is the Lord not preparing a people for the New Kingdom to be established at the second coming of Christ?

A tremendous need

Christianity has sunk to an all-time low in our generation. Our churches have become formal and lifeless. While Islam advances through the world by the power of the sword, Bible-believing Christians are content to sleep on their comfortable pews, forgetting that they have the powerful sword of the Spirit at their disposal. Who can question the desperate need of a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

Collectively and individually we must look Heavenward for God’s hand to move amongst us once again. The forces of Antichrist are already gathering for the last great battle. As each day passes society and the church become increasingly carnal and godless. Our nation’s politicians and religious leaders have no answer for the mindless violence and wickedness on our streets. But, as Christians, we do, but we do not have the power to stand up or speak up.

Criminally powerless

We claim that we have received the Holy Spirit, though the evidence for this is extremely scant, yet we are so ineffective. In light of the fact that countless millions are doomed to eternal damnation, it is criminal for us to be so powerless. How can a just God hold us guiltless when we shirk our God-given responsibilities? “if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman’s hand” (Ezekiel 33:6).

Religious nuts or spiritual fruit?

Our churches have become fixated with doing religious works, but there is very

little fruit for our labours. Millions are spent on campaigns, gimmicks and novelties to make the unsaved churchgoers, and if they do come in, that is the highest level of spirituality they will ever reach. Our churches have become the storehouses for religious nuts.

There is plenty of Christian effort and zeal, but where is the effectiveness? What we need is not another push to sell Christianity to the masses, we need what we lack, the power and might of the Holy Spirit.

The remedy

The remedy for all of our ills within the Body of Christ is a powerful outpouring of God's power. Let there be a revival in our hearts and we will drive out bitterness and discontent from amongst us. Let there be a revival in our hearts and we will walk in holiness and righteousness in a godless world. Let there be a revival in our hearts and we will boldly proclaim the only Gospel that can save a person from Hell. Let there be a revival in our hearts and the church will once again shake the very foundations of Hell itself and millions will be delivered from the powers of darkness. "And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes" (Ezekiel 36:23).

We are meant to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-14), but have we lost our "savour" and has our light become darkened? Since we have allowed this to happen, it is we who must cry out to God to be re-salted and empowered.

Pentecost is repeatable

Undeniably we need less religious machinery and more power. To receive the power of Pentecost we will have to meet the conditions. If we do, God will demonstrate the results of such power, the same results seen amongst every generation of believers who have bowed the knee and decided to walk in holiness. We must open up the windows of our hearts and let the Holy Spirit fill and dominate us. What are the conditions?

* Prayer. The first century church prayed. When a nation has been visited with a mighty revival it resulted from Christians praying fervently. We must be definite about what we want from God. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them" (Mark 11:24).

* Faith. Prayer without faith is mocking God. How will we ever receive anything from God if we cannot believe He will do?

* Holiness. Church members are experts in seeking a path between holiness and sin. Our love affair with easy religion and the world has to go if we are to be blessed by God in this day.

Conclusion

“Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the LORD of hosts” (Zechariah 4:6). This is where the answer lies for the lack of spiritual enthusiasm in our churches and the awful conditions on our streets. But there will be no change until we see our desperate need, fall on our knees before God, and claim the mighty baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Is this too much to ask? Is there another way to bring revival? The “might” and “power” of religious gimmickry has been tried, now it is time to allow the LORD of Hosts to send His Spirit upon us.

How to receive the Spirit

“If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13).

Introduction

This is the promise for every believer. The verse not only tells us about the promise, but also how to receive it. Ask and receive.

The conditions

What are the conditions for receiving?

1. This blessing can only be enjoyed by someone who has been born again.
2. The blessing must be desired. “Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled” (Matthew 5:6.)
3. Understand what you are seeking. It is not some emotional or charismatic manifestation that should be sought, instead it is imparted perfection. It is the perfection of the perfect God coming into our lives enabling us to walk in holiness and sanctification. It means that we are being “filled with all the fulness of God.”
4. Seek it until it is obtained. The resolution to be filled must be settled, decided and uncompromising.

How to ask

1. Separate from all known evil ... (1 Thessalonians 5:22). This means that we must live the way God intended for us.
2. Separate ourselves unto God. It is not enough to be moral. We must be “in” Christ if we are to receive.
3. Believe. Without faith we cannot receive anything from the Lord. In other words, a whole-hearted consecration to God is vital.
4. Do not trust in feelings. Emotions and experimental knowledge are poor evidence of the fulness of the Spirit. Simple faith, independent of feelings is all that is required.
5. Obey God. How can we expect to receive if we are unwilling to obey the word of God? We must have a continuous, unhesitating obedience to all the known will of God.

Conclusion

Once the conditions have been met there is no reason for delay. God can work immediately. Simply trust Him to do it . . . “Whatsoever things ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them and ye shall have them” (Mark 11:24.) Then we will find that our usefulness for God will be enlarged, and the joy of the Lord increasing day by day. Thus we shall be changed “from glory to glory” by the Spirit of the Lord.

I take the promised Holy Ghost,
I take the power of Pentecost
To fill me to the uttermost.
I take, He undertakes.

Please review this book if it has been a blessing to you.